

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 114583

EXDIS

FOL RPT BAGHDAD 0931 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA,
DJIBOUTI, HAVANA, JIDDA, KHARTOUM, MOGADISCIO, MOSCOW &
USUN NEW YORK DTD 03 MAY 78

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0931

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PORG, AF, IZ
SUBJECT: SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN: AN IRAQI VIEW

REF: (A) BAGHDAD 0913, (B) STATE 46020, (C) BAGHDAD 0871.

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL SOUNDS ALARM
OVER SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN. END SUMMARY

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY COUNSELOR HADDAWI DREW USINT
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POLITICAL OFFICER INTO CORNER AT SOCIAL OCCASION FOR
A SURPRISINGLY FRANK AIRING OF IRAQI WORRY OVER HORN OF
AFRICA. HADDAWI INTRODUCED THE SUBJECT BY ASKING
ABOUT USG POLICY TOWARD INDIAN OCEAN. POLOFF BRIEFED
HIM ON STATUS OF US-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS, CONCLUDING
WITH CAVEAT THAT CURRENT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN
AND ASSOCIATED INCREASE OF THEIR NAVAL FORCES ARE

INCONSISTENT WITH THESE TALKS (REF B).

3. HADDAWI RESPONDED BY EXPRESSING SURPRISE THAT
USG WAS ALLOWING SOVIETS AND CUBANS TO INCREASE PRESENCE
IN AFRICA, ESPECIALLY IN STRATEGIC AREAS OF HORN. HE
SUGGESTED USG NO LONGER CARED MUCH ABOUT AFRICA.

4. AFTER LETTING HADDAWI TAKE CONVERSATIONAL LEAD,
POLOFF NOTED USG HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT SOVIET UNION'S
LARGER INTERESTS IN DETENTE COULD NOT BE UNAFFECTED
BY LACK OF SOVIET RESTRAINT IN OTHER AREAS. IT WAS
NECESSARY, HOWEVER, FOR AFRICAN AND ARAB STATES
TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENTS OF SOVIETS
AND THEIR CUBAN CLIENTS. IRAQ HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH
SOVIETS AND CUBANS, AND IT WAS NATURAL TO ASK WHY
IRAQ DID NOT USE ITS INFLUENCE TO OBTAIN THEIR
WITHDRAWAL. WHEREAS SOVIET PRESENCE IN HORN AFFECTED
USG INTERESTS INDIRECTLY, IT AFFECTED IRAQI DIRECTLY.
IRAQI PRESS, HOWEVER, NEVER EVEN MENTIONED PRESENCE OF
SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA.

5. HADDAWI SAID IRAQ HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL HOW
IT HANDLED RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS. PEOPLE IN
FOREIGN MINISTRY WERE, HE SAID, VERY CONCERNED ABOUT
SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN HORN. WHILE IRAQ HAS BEEN
PUBLICLY SILENT, IT HAS MADE ITS VIEWS FELT. OGADEN
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SITUATION HAD BEEN AMBIGUOUS AND SOMALI ACTIONS UNWISE,
BUT IRAQ KNOWS SOVIETS SEEK PERMANENT PRESENCE ON
RED SEA. AT THIS POINT, CONVERSATION BROKE OFF AS
OTHER DIPLOMATS JOINED US.

6. COMMENT: HADDAWI WAS SPEAKING IN HIGHLY INFORMAL
MANNER. IF WE HAD RAISED ISSUE OF HORN AS PART OF
OUR FORMAL SOUNDINGS ON NONALIGNED ISSUES (REF C),
HE WOULD LIKELY HAVE REACTED WITH THE KIND OF GUARDED
SUSPICION WHICH HE SHOWED ON THAT OCCASION. NONETHELESS,
HADDAWI PROBABLY REFLECTED GENUINE IRAQI CONCERNS
ABOUT SOVIET MOTIVES IN THE HORN. WE CONTINUE TO
BEWARE THAT IRAQ WILL RESIST DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE
AT FORTHCOMING NONALIGNED CONFERENCE, WHERE HADDAWI
WILL BE NUMBER TWO ON DELEGATION. TACTICAL ALLIANCE
WITH CBA PLAYS TOO GREAT A ROLE IN IRAQI APPROACH
TO NAM. NONETHELESS, IRAQ IS LIKELY TO MOVE IN
DIRECTION OF GREATER CRITICISM OF SOVIET AND CUBAN
PRESENCE IN HORN. INITIATIVE OF NORMALLY SUPER
CAUTIOUS IRAQI DIPLOMAT TO SPEAK SO OPENLY TO AN
AMERICAN IS ONE MEASURE OF IRAQI UNHAPPINESS. ERITREA
DOES NOT HAVE STATUS OF SACRED CAUSE ACCORDED TO

PALESTINE, BUT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT HAS PLAINLY GOT
IRAQIS UPSET. PECK UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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